



The Development and Pilot Testing of an Educational Mental Health Intervention for Gaelic Footballers

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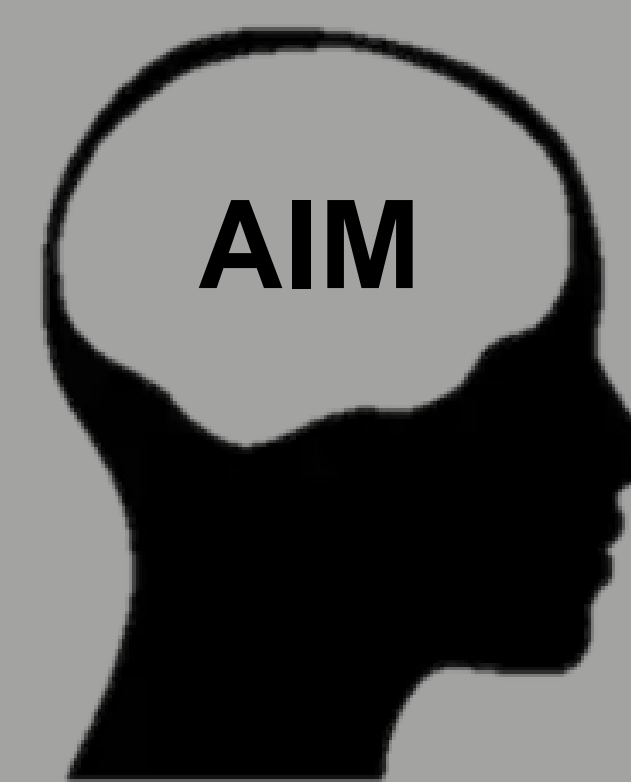
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Introduction

Elite Gaelic players with a history of injury are significantly more likely to experience anxiety and depression[†]. However, current preliminary research identified lack of education, stigma, accessibility issues and negative attitudes as barriers to help-seeking among Gaelic footballers following injury.



To develop and pilot test an educational mental health intervention to facilitate psychological help-seeking among Gaelic footballers.

Methods

A matrix of objectives was developed outlining the key determinants and learning objectives of the intervention (Figure 1). A 25-minute novel mental health literacy presentation was developed in collaboration with athletic therapists, sports scientists and sports psychologists. A pilot study examining clarity of the intervention was conducted among athletes (N=13; 24.6±3.5 years) from a variety of sports using a content evaluation measure that included 9 statements rated from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very) and 5 additional open-ended responses.

Recognition

Knowledge of mental disorders and symptoms

Knowledge

Where, when and how to get help and self-treatment and professional help strategies

Attitudes

Benefits of seeking help and willingness to utilise professional services

Results

The content of the programme was positively rated, with an average score of 3.5 out of a possible 4.0. Participants reported the content as informative, relevant, clear and concise. Further examples of real-life applicability, visual improvements and the addition of a summary were key changes made following feedback from participants.

Figure 1. Educational programme key determinants and learning objectives

Discussion

A comprehensible, succinct educational mental health literacy programme was developed and will be implemented with Gaelic footballers. The educational programme may be beneficial in minimising barriers perceived by Gaelic footballers, which may subsequently facilitate psychological help-seeking following injury.

[†]Gouttebauge, V., Tol, J.L. and Kerkhoffs, G.M. (2016). Epidemiology of symptoms of common mental disorders among elite Gaelic athletes: a prospective cohort study. *The Physician and Sportsmedicine*. 44(3), pp.283-289.